

## Education Convention.

Concluded.

FRIDAY, 8 o'clock, A. M.

The convention being called to order, was opened with prayer by the Rev. Mr. Cross.

The fifth resolution of the committee, which related to the appointment of a General Superintendent of Common Schools, was reported. The convention proceeded to the consideration of said resolution.

Mr. AMES moved that the resolution be so amended that the superintendent should be elected by the people of the State at large, at the annual election; which was seconded.

JAMES RARDEN, Esq., supported the amendment, with some happy and forcible remarks. He had gained more confidence in the honesty, integrity, and purity of purpose in the people than in the Legislature. With the people, the primary object will be to promote sound practical education, to open the fountains of education that the State may be watered by the streams of intelligence.

Mr. CHASE of Brookville, remarked that he was in favor of the adoption of the resolution before the convention; that during his experience in and knowledge of matters in connection with common school education he had always observed that a system of common schools, however well organized, without a State Superintendent at its head, was like a vessel fully-rigged, all her sails set, and colors flying, without a captain. That the State Superintendent is necessary, and if a competent man, his main object would be to conciliate stronger influences, and bring to his assistance stronger agencies that would in return most benefit him and strengthen his popularity.

Persons connected with politics lost all personal independence. They cannot go back to the party to which they belong, if they do not, they are immediately regarded as traitors to their party and country. Should they fail in supporting any of the measures of choice candidate of their party, they would be discarded and disowned. It required personal independence and moral courage, such as few politicians of the day possess, to break through the party discipline and transcend the dictates of the leaders. The fact that do are victimized, and their political death warrant is immediately sealed.

The office, Mr. R. said, is one of great importance. A competent person should be selected, and he preferred that the election should be kept free and wholly unimpeachable by partisan interest and State politics. It was more important to the people who should be Governor; for it affected interests that were progressive, and the result would be continually developing for good or evil as long as the system remained.

Dr. WYLIE advocated the election of experimental by the people in a characteristic and eloquent speech, of which no abstract could do justice to the original.

M. J. H. HENRY, of Vigo, then moved to amend by striking all out before the word "Resolved," and inserting the following:

"That we recommend to the Legislature the election of a State Superintendent of common schools, by the people of the State at the annual election, whose duty it shall be to attend to all matters pertaining to the interest of common schools; introduce the best methods of teaching; encourage the employment of teachers who are well qualified in respect to moral character, learning, and ability; recommend suitable text-books; visit schools and make known their true condition and wants; advise with the friends of education, and report to the Legislature the most approved measures to improve our common school system; watch over the management, safe-keeping and disbursement of the school money; deliver public addresses; and to the best of his ability, promote the cause of sound practical education."

Mr. LANE opposed strenuously the election of a superintendent. He contended that such an officer would belong to some one of the political parties, or to one of the many religious denominations, and would exercise the advantage his position would give him to favor the party or sect to which he belonged. The office was too exalted for sectarian particularities or prejudices, and the evils consequent thereof on so serious and incurable a character, that the very possibility of their occurrence should be avoided at all times.

He further considered that such an officer would be discharged as efficiently and gratuitously by district superintendents.

Mr. L. stated that New York had adopted free school systems, without a State superintendent; and argued from such instances that State superintendents were not necessary for the successful operation of the system.

He, Mr. L. said, however, if such an office is to be created, he would unhesitatingly give his preference for filling the office by the people, rather than by the Legislature.

Mr. HENRY said he regarded this resolution recommending a State Superintendent to be effected by the people, as one of the greatest importance to the improvement of our common schools. It has been remarked by a gentleman who had just taken his seat, that he regarded such a measure as the death of the common schools, but with all due deference to his age and experience, I regard it, said Mr. H., as the life of them. Our school system wants instruction and direction; and a superintendent of pre-eminent moral and intellectual qualifications, who will give himself with self-sacrificing devotion to the cause, will give new life and energy and efficient action to our school system.

This convention is assembled for the purpose of promoting education, and particularly to put forth a united effort for the improvement of our common schools. The educational wants of the State are great, very great. There are only thirty-five per hundred of the children and youth in Indiana from five to twenty-one years of age, who are receiving instruction in our common schools, leaving near two-thirds of them destitute of all opportunity for education.

The voice of more than two hundred thousand children and youth comes up to us calling for schools; and I hear the voice of near a hundred and fifty thousand more calling for better schools. Shall they call in vain? It is the desire of the friends of education that the rising generation, one and all, shall receive the inestimable advantages of early and correct instruction. It is the desire of its Creator written upon the immortal mind, that the right to education is as natural and inalienable as the right to freedom. Where is the man who would deprive the right of the right of suffrage? Yet the right to be instructed in all that makes the man and freeman, is not less sacred or less important.

Will our present school system accomplish so high an object? Will it fit the rising generation for the ordinary duties of life? Indiana cannot long maintain her present position. She must and she will go forward in the work of universal popular education. And how shall she do it? Do as other States have done; establish a head which shall wisely direct and give energy and action to her school system. A State Superintendent with county superintendents to assist him, will be the main spring of action.

I have but little objection between the original resolution and the amendment. I prefer the amendment, as it sets forth more truly the duties of superintendents; but whether the amendment shall be adopted or not, I shall be in favor of the resolution.

While I am on the floor, said Mr. H., allow me, Mr. President, to reply to what I consider with a due deference, the uncalled for remarks of two and only two gentlemen against the Legislature for having recommended the holding of this convention. One gentleman remarked that he thought it very remarkable that the Legislature should have called the convention, but that the Legislature did not know what to do with the great mass of education, and so they called together the wisdom and counsel of the State to let them. Mr. H. continued, Mr. President, when I introduced into the Senate the resolution commanding the holding of this convention, I did not expect the Legislature would be arrested before this honorable assembly on a charge of ignorance. I think I have seen at least the dawning of some intelligence in the Legislature, and here in this Assembly I see intent and intelligence shine forth in the full blaze of day; and when that gentleman arose and addressed the convention, it was

"Like another man."

Risen on another.

But I could not but think it unfair in one who is so great to try to get the Legislature of his State to appear as such. Did it not then lie an attempt to elevate himself and the Legislature above?

During his remarks, Mr. P. paid a just tribute to the character, office, labor, and influence of the faithful teacher, remarking that God himself had done much for us in a work which like the dew of heaven, shall shed its blessings upon all alike.

Mr. CHASE said he was gratified with the harmonious interest the convention manifested in all the departments of education and thought it a conclusive induction of the future prosperity of the cause.

The resolution under consideration declares the convention that the State could pay her debts, and wished to avoid responsibility and throw it upon the school system till the State could pay her bonds.

It is right, it is just, said Mr. P., that Indiana should acknowledge her debts and pay them as soon

as she can, but, sir, much as she owes her bondholders, there is another class of persons to whom she is still more closely bound in justice. I mean the children of the State who were brought into existence without any act of their own, and whose intelligence, (if they are educated) will develop measurably the resources of the State, and enable her the earlier to pay off her bonds; but whose ignorance and vice (if they are uneducated) will leave those resources untouched, and will tax the existing wealth of the State to catch and punish criminals, made such by want of schools, and to build and sustain poor houses, jails, and prisons.

Mr. DAILY moved that the proposed amendment be adopted. By improving and qualifying teachers, it was more important to a patron who the firm determination of improving schools, without wasting for the mass of the people to move, the enterprise would be accomplished, and a harmonious and successful system of common school education would be the result.

How, implored Mr. C., can common schools be best improved? By improving and qualifying teachers.

The amendment offered by Mr. AMES was then adopted.

Mr. LANE moved to strike out the words "properly and simply," and insert the words "liberally" "the compensation of the Superintendent"; which motion did not prevail.

The resolution, as amended, was then adopted.

The sixth resolution of the committee providing for the appointment of state Superintendents who shall report to the State Superintendent, was adopted without discussion.

Mr. BUTLER, from the committee, reported two additional resolutions which were to constitute the 7th and 8th of the series, which were as follows:

7th. Resolved, That it is important that the nature and value of our civil institutions be carefully taught in all our common schools and higher Seminaries.

8th. Resolved, That we deem it a matter of the utmost importance to the success of our common schools that the character and qualifications of teachers in the primary institutions should be greatly improved, and for this purpose we recommend to the Legislature to take measures to improve our County Seminaries, so that they may furnish the necessary instruction to such as may seek this employment and that those who receive gratuitous tuition in the State University shall pledge themselves to engage in teaching for a certain length of time in return for the gratuity of instruction received.

As the vote was about to be taken immediately on the 7th resolution,

Mr. CRESSEY said he hoped it would not be permitted to pass without some discussion.

Mr. KIRKIN thereupon remarked as it was the wish of his friend (Mr. A.) that the resolution should not be passed over by a silent vote, he would willingly say a few words, hoping that it might induce remonstrants from others to discuss the subject. He did so more willingly because he had himself drafted the resolution and under a firm conviction that the matters involved were worthy of grave consideration. It has long seemed to me, he continued, that many, if not all, who are entrusted with the education of youth, from the family up to the highest seminaries, have too much neglected this branch of instruction. And I am glad that I now have it in my power to express this conviction to this learned Convention. Not that I am able to teach the venerable gentlemen before assembled, some of whom are in charge of our Colleges and Universities, and others representing other interests of literature on this floor. But I can awaken one thought, or call into action one effort that would otherwise have been made, I hope will be given to the object of this resolution.

He explained that in school matters as in military, there must be a trial, and the army does not give education to the General so much as the General to the men in the ranks—thus the soldiers, with Marshals as sub-superintendents, and they in turn with their Generals, Colonels, Captains and lower subordinates brought the whole in power of the nation into life and action and efficiency. So it was with New York and the new law—explained that the Secretary of State was *merely* the Superintendent, but he had nothing to do with the school matters but to subscribe his name to the reports of the deputy who is *really* the State Superintendent, *overriding* the laws and directions of all while machinery—that this apparent inconsistency was the result of political intrigue which passes every thing it touches, but though the name of State Superintendent was abolished or incorporated with that of Secretary of State, yet the office and the office really existed, and that without this the whole system would be a nullity.

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